

Forum Will Focus on Farm Bill, Trade Agreements
February 6, 2008

WASHINGTON, D.C. -U.S. Representative Charlie Melancon, D-Napoleonville, and U.S. Representative Charles W. Boustany, Jr., R-Lafayette, announced today that they will host Farm Day 2008 on February 20th at the West St. Mary Civic Center in Jeanerette. All interested farmers and ranchers in South Louisiana are invited to attend. This annual forum provides information for farmers and ranchers in South Louisiana about current legislation and policies in Washington affecting agriculture.

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Farm Day 2008 will focus on the status of the new Farm Bill and relevant trade agreements and will feature agriculture experts, leading researchers and industry specialists. Mark Keenum, USDA Under Secretary for Farm and Foreign Agricultural Service, will deliver the keynote address during lunch (see bio below). Farm Day 2008 follows last year's successful forum in Rayne that was also co-hosted by Melancon and Boustany.

Rep. Melancon said today, **"Farmers and ranchers in South Louisiana no doubt have questions about developments in Washington that could impact their livelihoods, especially with regard to the renewal of the Farm Bill and possible upcoming trade agreements. Farm Day 2008 will bring together experts and policymakers with those in South Louisiana who are most affected by agricultural policy. I urge every farmer and rancher who is able to attend Farm Day 2008."**

"Hearing from farmers and ranchers across Southwestern Louisiana helps Charlie and I as we work for a better Farm Bill," Rep. Boustany said. "Understanding the difficulties our farm families face is critical to developing a responsible and effective bill. I look forward to a very productive meeting."

Details for Farm Day 2008 are as follows:

Who: Louisiana farmers and ranchers
Mark Keenum, USDA Under Secretary for Farm and Foreign Agricultural Service
U.S. Representative Charlie Melancon
U.S. Representative Charles W. Boustany, Jr., M.D.
Research professionals and industry experts

What: Farm Day 2008

When: Wednesday, February 20, 2008

Where: West St. Mary Civic Center
1498 Hwy 318
Jeanerette, Louisiana

Schedule

9:00 a.m. Registration

10:00 a.m. Presentation from industry experts on the status of the farm bill and trade agreements

Noon Lunch and address by keynote speaker, Mark Keenum, USDA Under Secretary,
Farm and Foreign Agricultural Service

RSVP: Interested participants should RSVP by calling 866-289-9210 or emailing
FarmDay2008@Mail.House.Gov

*****Following the presentation, there will be a brief media availability with the panelists.□**

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Bio for Mark E. Keenum, Under Secretary, Farm and Foreign Agricultural Service

Dr. Mark Everett Keenum was sworn in as Under Secretary on December 20, 2006. Dr. Keenum provides leadership and oversight for the Farm Service Agency, the Risk Management Agency and the Foreign Agricultural Service.

The mission area helps to ensure the well-being of American agriculture and the American public through efficient and equitable administration of agricultural commodity, farm loan, conservation, environmental, emergency assistance, and domestic and international food assistance programs. It provides and supports cost-effective means of managing risk for agricultural producers in order to improve the economic stability of agriculture. The mission area also represents the diverse interests of the U.S. food and agricultural sector abroad by managing the Department's international activities, addressing market access constraints, and working to expand markets for U.S. agricultural, fish and forest products overseas.

In 1989, Dr. Keenum joined the Washington, D.C. staff of U.S. Senator Thad Cochran as Legislative Assistant for Agriculture and Natural Resources. As Senator Cochran's advisor on agricultural affairs, he worked on numerous issues important to Mississippi agriculture, including the 1990, 1996, and 2002 Farm Bills. From 1996 through 2006, he served as Chief of Staff for Senator Cochran. In this role, Dr. Keenum was the chief advisor to the Senator on political, legislative, and appropriations issues. He was also responsible for managing the administrative

and legislative functions of Senator Cochran's Washington, D.C. office and three Mississippi state offices.

After completing his Bachelor's and Master's Degree in Agricultural Economics at Mississippi State University (MSU), Dr. Keenum joined the MSU faculty as a Marketing Specialist with the Mississippi Cooperative Extension Service at MSU in 1984. After two years with the Extension Service, he accepted a position as a Research Associate with the Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station at MSU.

In 1988, Dr. Keenum received his Ph.D. in Agricultural Economics from MSU and joined the faculty of the MSU Department of Agricultural Economics as an Assistant Professor/Economist. During his professional tenure at MSU, his primary research and extension work focused on the marketing and economics of aquaculture, specialty crops and forestry. From 1997 through 2006, Dr. Keenum also served as an Agricultural Economics Adjunct Professor at MSU and taught an annual seminar course on agricultural legislative policy.

Mark and his wife Rhonda reside in Fairfax County, Virginia, and have four children.